ederick Post

GOOD MORNING!

"From undirected power is little profit won."
(Sanskrit)

)ERICK, MD., SATURDAY, JUNE 29, 1968 Press Run { Post 13,925 News 11,100 Total 25,025 TWENTY-FOUR PAGES PRICE FIVE CENTS

Sirhan Wins 3-Week Delay On Plea In Kennedy Death

Hearing Held Under Heavy Security Guard

Only 9 Minutes For Decision

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Sirhan Bishara Sirhan—slight, erect, expressionless—walked into a heavily guarded jail chapel Friday and received a three-week postponement of his plea to a charge of murdering Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

"Yes, sir," the 24-year - old Jordanian immigrant responded politely three times to the judge's questions. Sirhan was nearly dwarfed by four husky sheriff's deputies who stood near him throughout the nine-minute hearing.

The delay was asked by veteran criminal attorney Russell E. Parsons, who took over Sirhan's defense, at the accused's request and without fee, nine days ago. Parsons said he had only "limited time" to study the transcript of grand jury testimony.

The hearing was held in the third-floor chapel of the Los Angeles County Central Jail—a large, oblong, plain room with oak pews for about 350 persons.

Around 175 attended—newsmen, plainclothes detectives, a score or more members of the public. Sirhan's brother Adel, 29, escorted by several police detectives, was a front-row spectator.

Security measures were extreme. Deputies frisked spectators— even Sheriff Peter J. Pitchess—as they reached the building. Pocket knives were temporarily confiscated—even a money clip with a pen knife in it.

There was a television crew from Rome, along with reporters from France and other lands.

The proceedings, scheduled for 9 a.m., went like this:

9:03 a.m. A deputy announces that "anyone who stands or moves about will be removed from the courtroom."

9:05. Superior Court Judge Richard Schauer takes his place, standing, behind a lectern at the rear of the platform. For the Stenotypist's record he announces that "these facili-

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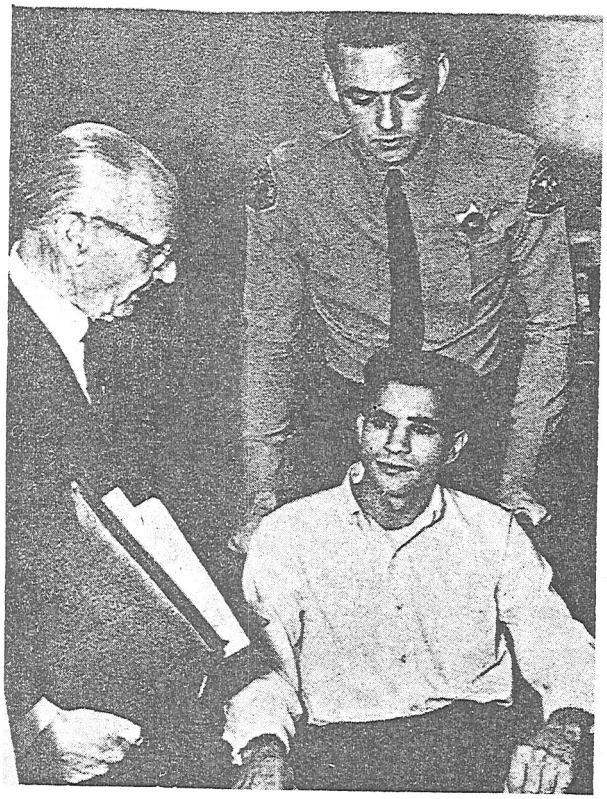

AP Wirephoto

SIRHAN GOES BACK TO CELL—A deputy sheriff wheels Sirhan Bishara Sirhan, accused slayer of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, to an elevator in the Los Angeles County Central jail en route to his cell after a hearing yesterday at which his attorney, Russell E. Parsons, left, won a three-week continuance for entering a plea to a charge of murder.

SIRHAN

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ties"—the jail chapel instead of a regular courtroom—are to insure the defendant's security."

Then: "Bring in the defendant."

Sirhan and the four deputies enter from a door onstage to the audience's right.

Still not fully recovered from finger and ankle injuries received during his capture at the assassination scene, he has been brought by wheelchair from his cell to outside the courtroom.

But now—on contrast to his arraignment in the same room on June 7—Sirhan is able to walk into the chpel.

He wears a light blue shirt, tight black pants and well polished black loafers. He has no necktie. His face is pale and appears freshly shaved. His kinky black hair, apparently freshly cut, is neatly combed.

"Your name is Sirhan Bishara Sirhan?" the judge asks.

"Yes, sir." His voice is level, even, matter-of-fact. It is amplified through a microphone in front of him to a temporary loudspeaker half way back along the chapel wall.

"You desire to substitute Mr. Parsons for the public defender?"

"Yes, sir, we do."

Sirhan rubs his chin with the thumb of his left hand.

Judge: "Is your client ready to plead, Mr. Parsons?"

Parsons, 69 and graying, in a rumpled black suit: "No, because of the limited time I have had, I request a recess of three weeks."

Parsons noted also that one of two court-appointed psychiatrists, Dr. Edward Stainbrook, "has declined to act."

Judge Schauer thereupon appointed Dr. George Abe to join Dr. Eric Marcus in examining Sirhan.

Parsons asked that the examination be made "as expeditiously as can be done."

"Fou wish a general psychiatric examination?" the judge asked.

"Yes," Parsons replied.

Schauer granted a postponement to July 19, which he noted "comes dangerously close" to the end of the 60-day period in which, by law, Sirhan must be brought to trial or the indictment dismissed.

"Mr. Sirhan," he asked, "... do you give up your right to go to trial in a 60-day period and go to trial at a later date?"

"Yes, sir, I do," the youth replied. Parsons said: "I join in the waiver, your honor."

The indictment charges one count of murder and five of assault with intent to commit murder. Five bystanders were wounded in the fusillade that fatally wounded the New York senator at the Ambassador Hotel just after he had proclaimed to jubilant supporters his victory in California's Democratic Presidential primary election.

At 9:13 the session ended and Sirhan's escort of four deputies accompanied him out of the room and back to his constantly watched cell.